

OUR COUNTY AND ITS PEOPLE.

A DESCRIPTIVE WORK ON

JEFFERSON COUNTY

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EDITED BY

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control of the library, chiefly on account of the valuable books it contained. But as the books were little read, owing to the absence of any system of loaning, the trustees in 1872 generously offered to surrender control of the library to the board of education on certain conditions, one of which was a requirement that a suitable place be provided for its accommodation. The room in the Utley building, formerly occupied by the board, and also by the public library, was found insufficient to contain the institute library, therefore rooms Nos. 2 and 3 in the Doolittle & Hall building were rented, and were occupied during the summer of 1872. At that time the consolidated library contained a total of 2,845 volumes, of which 1,323 were from the old public school library; 1,361 from the institute collection, and 158 from the old Delta Phi library of former years.

From that to the present time the board of education has made an annual appropriation of moneys for the maintenance and increase of the library. The latter was kept in rooms rented for its use until the completion of the city hall and was then removed to specially prepared apartments in that splendid building. It is under the immediate care of a librarian, and the general charge of a committee of the board of education. The library now contains about 7,000 volumes.

The Water Supply System.—In the spring of 1821 the village authorities and business men began to discuss the subject of the water supply for domestic and fire purposes, but further than a discussion of the question nothing was accomplished. In 1829 the trustees appropriated \$50 for the purpose of boring a well on Factory square, and in the next year it was voted to apply the proceeds of licenses in the third ward toward procuring a water supply for the village. At the trustees' meeting, May 21, 1829, the sum of \$200 was voted for the purpose of boring for water, and accordingly an artesian well was begun on the public square, or mall. After the well had been bored to a considerable depth some person through wantonness dropped the steel drill, point upwards, in the hole, thus effectually stopping the work. In the same year a company was formed for the purpose of boring for water on Factory square, and accordingly, a hole two and one-half inches in diameter was bored to a depth of about 127 feet, when water was found. The well was tubed and until about 1860 discharged a good supply of water, the latter being slightly charged with iron and sulphur. About the same time a similar well was drilled on Sewall's island, and at a depth of 80 feet was found both water and inflammable gas. The well

was drilled deeper into the rock and both the former discoveries entirely disappeared.

The first regularly organized company whose object was to supply the village with water for all general purposes, was the Watertown water company, incorporated April 10, 1826, but beyond the creation of the corporation nothing appears to have been done by the promoters of the enterprise. The same fate seems to have overtaken the Watertown water works company, incorporated April 11, 1845.¹ This company evidently acted with some deliberation and possibly with the encouragement of the village trustees. In 1844 the latter passed a resolution directing engineer Timothy Dewey to make proper inquiries, plans and estimates with a view to determine the most available and sufficient sources of supply, and also the probable cost of the completed system. On November 13, 1844, Mr. Dewey made a detailed report which was published in the *Jeffersonian* on December 3d of that year. The worthy engineer reviewed the subject of water works systems generally, mentioning the source of supply in many of the principal cities and European countries; and having evidently prepared the minds of the readers for the adoption of some system for this village, proceeded to set forth the desirability of a reservoir at the cold springs, on the Davenport farm, two and one-half miles from the village, from which the water was to be distributed through the streets by iron pipes. The second plan contemplated the construction of a system much upon the lines of the present water works. But the most interesting portion of engineer Dewey's report was the argument in favor of a system of some kind. He said:

"Beside, there will be a great saving of soap, as well as hard labor, in washing; more than one-third of the cost of soap will be saved, and one quarter of the time bestowed in this necessary occupation. How much longer shall it be said that the luxury of a bath in the health preserving and invigorating element cannot be obtained in Watertown; that the element which the saint and savage, the Turk and Christian most adore shall remain a stranger in the place. Shall the hands and face only receive a small share of the blessing, and the vital organs take care of themselves as best they may? . . . Why may it not soon be said that Watertown with its public square, with its spouting fountains, its literary and scientific institute, its fine and well filled churches, its moral and energetic population, its inexhaustible water power, is the most desirable residence in the northern part of this splendid Union?"

¹ The incorporators were Loveland Paddock, Timothy Dewey, F. W. Hubbard, N. M. Woodruff and Orville Hungerford.

However, on Mr. Dewey's report we cannot dwell at length. His plans were not adopted at the time, but may have been a factor in determining the action of the commissioners who in fact established the village water system in 1853. Under the act of 1845 nothing substantial was accomplished, but eight years later a complete water works was constructed. The incorporating act was passed March 22, and Loveland Paddock, George C. Sherman, Isaac H. Fisk, William H. Angel and Howell Cooper were declared to be the water commissioners¹ of the village of Watertown. The commissioners were directed to furnish a joint bond in the sum of \$60,000 for the faithful performance of their duties, and were authorized to borrow on the credit of the village the sum of \$60,000 for a term of 30 years. With the fund created by the sale of bonds the water works system of the village was built during the year 1853, the water being turned into the pipes on November 23. The system still remains, yet not one vestige of the original plant is now in use.

The first pumping house and reservoir were constructed by C. Jay Wells; the machinery was furnished by Hoard & Bradford, and the pipes were laid by J. Ball & Co. For the reservoir the commissioners secured from John C. Sterling a six acre tract of land a mile southeast of the village, on the brow of a limestone ridge, 180 feet above the public square. Mr. Sterling, as executor of Micah Sterling's estate, also offered to convey to the commissioners a twenty acre tract of land adjoining the reservoir lot, for the purposes of a park, but on the condition that the same be laid out with drives, walks and other park improvements; and also that the sum of \$250 be expended in this work within the next succeeding eighteen months. The offer was made April 9, 1853, and was accepted by the board, but the conditions were not fully carried out according to the terms of the donation, and on June 3, 1864, the commissioners reconveyed to the executors (John C. Sterling and Lawrence J. Goodale) a considerable portion of the tract. Through this inadvertence Watertown lost the opportunity of having a beautiful park tract.

The water works was of ample capacity at the time of its construction, but as the village grew into a city, and increased in population and commercial interests an enlargement of the system became necessary. In 1871 the reservoir capacity was more than doubled, and in 1882 a new

¹The act of May 22, 1807, declares that the commissioners of water works of the city shall constitute the "board of water works."

pumping station was built at the so-called Delano falls, on the south side of the river. Other material improvements were also made, and in that year the board expended about \$60,000. In 1897 still further additions were made, particularly in erecting a new pumping station at a cost of more than \$30,000, and constructing a settling basin and laying intake pipe at the expense of more than \$24,000. The entire cost of the system to the present time has been about \$385,000, and the amount of outstanding water bonds is \$235,000. This department of municipal government, however, is self-sustaining, and the water works are maintained with no expense to the taxpayers. The system comprises about 27 miles of main pipes; 250 fire hydrants; 1,500 taps. The annual revenue aggregates about \$30,000. The presidents of the board of water commissioners have been as follows:

Loveland Paddock, June-Sept., 1853; Geo. C. Sherman, Sept. 1853-June, 1863; Isaac H. Fisk, 1863-June, 1869; A. D. Remington, 1869-June, 1873; Richard Van Namee, 1873-July 6, 1886; John C. Knowlton, July 6, 1886-.

The clerks of the board have been Geo. C. Sherman, 1853-58; G. R. Hauford, 1858-63; Isaac H. Fisk (prest. and secty.) 1863-Jan. 1864; Chas. Strang, Jan.-Nov. 1864; John F. Moffett, 1864-1869; Nathaniel P. Wardwell, July 1, 1869-Jan. 1, 1898; Gary M. Jones, Jan. 1, 1898-.

The Watertown Gaslight company was incorporated in March, 1852, with a capital of \$20,000, although in September of the preceding year the trustees had by ordinance granted to Walworth, Nason & Guild the exclusive right to supply the village with resin gas for a period of ten years. The regularly organized gas company began operations in 1852 by erecting buildings on Anthony street and laying pipes throughout the principal business streets. The work was completed in due time and the affairs of the company were successfully conducted until 1874, when a reorganization was effected, a new set of stockholders came into the concern, and the operating capital was increased to \$100,000. As the city increased in population and business importance the works have been from time to time enlarged and extended. In 1897 the generating capacity of the plant was doubled, and can now produce 200,000 feet of gas per day. There are about fifteen miles of street pipes, and about 1,200 meters in use. The present officers of the company are Harry C. Whitney, president and manager; Anson R. Flower, vice-president; Silas L. George, secretary and treasurer; and Allen C. Beach, S. L. George, H. C. Whitney, A. R. Flower and Mrs. H. S. Story, directors.